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**Testimony of  
Barbara Henry, First Selectman, Town of Roxbury  
On behalf of the  
Connecticut Council of Small Towns  
Before the Planning & Development Committee  
March 10, 2010  
Legislative Office Building**

**RE: HB-5331<sup>7</sup> AN ACT AUTHORIZING TWO OR MORE MUNICIPALITIES TO  
PURSUE JOINT EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS.**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *supports HB-5331 which will give towns the opportunity to work together to negotiate lower health insurance costs by leveraging greater buying power.*

The skyrocketing costs for local employee and retiree health insurance represent one of the most serious fiscal challenges facing small towns. Double digit increases in health insurance costs have begun to dominate budget growth in many communities resulting in fewer resources available for other critical services, including education. Prescription drugs are one of the most significant drivers of rising health care costs.

However, towns have very few options in trying to manage health care costs. The need to negotiate employee health coverage makes it difficult for municipalities to respond to changing budgetary constraints or new plan offerings in a timely manner.

As a result, we welcome opportunities to address health care costs through legislation which would provide more affordable opportunities for towns to provide health insurance to their employees. By authorizing two or more towns to pursue joint employee health insurance plans, HB-5331 will provide our communities with a valuable mechanism for better controlling escalating health care costs.